

1574.
*The Death of SAMUEL, and the Lamentation
made for him, considered and improved*

IN A
S E R M O N

OCCASIONED

BY THE DEATH OF

Mr. SAMUEL WILTON,

Who departed this Life, JANUARY 21, 1779,
Aged 68.

By N. H I L L. *H*

L O N D O N:

Printed for JAMES BUCKLAND, No. 57, PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

Price SIX-PENCE. *75*

THE
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OF
NATURAL
HISTORY

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A
S E R M O N.

I AM now called, by Providence, to pay the last public tribute to the memory of an affectionate husband, a tender father, a kind and faithful friend, a much respected, endeared, and excellent Deacon of this church. It is a willing tribute I pay—a deserved tribute—yet the occasion is, in no small degree, painful to myself. I loved him in life; I lament him in death.

We of this church and congregation have had call upon call *, by death, to conceive of eternal concerns as the most momentous that can lie upon the heart; and to make an attention to them the business of what remains of life. It is my duty, as a minister, to fall in with God's providential calls: and it is a duty no less incumbent on every relative, on every friend, of the deceased, on every surviving member of this church, and on all who are assembled on this solemn occasion, to hearken to, to endeavour to

* Mr. John Mudge, an active and very useful deacon of the same church, died January 6, 1779.

understand the voice of God, and through grace improve it.

The words I have chosen on which to address you, are in

I SAM. XXV. I.

And Samuel died, and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah.

Solemn—mournful—instructive sight !

We have, in my text, two things recorded, viz. Samuel's death and burial, and the lamentation which was made by Israel for him.

We have in the

FIRST place, Samuel's death and burial.

Samuel was the son of Elkanah and Hannah, who were distinguished in Israel for their zeal, devotion, and piety. He was given in answer to his mother's fervent prayer : in reference to which remarkable circumstance, " she called his name, " Samuel, saying, because I have asked him of " the Lord *." He was devoted to God from his birth. His pious mother, in her prayer, said, " I will give him unto the Lord all the days of " his life." And when she brought him to Eli, she said, " for this child I prayed ; and the Lord " hath given me my petition which I asked of " him : therefore, also, I have lent him to the " Lord as long as he liveth ; he shall be lent un- " to the Lord †."

It was the unspeakable privilege and happiness of Samuel, to have been effectually called early in life. Divine things made a deep impression upon him in his youth. Devotedness to God

* I Sam. i. 20.

† Ver. ii. 27, 28.

and his service became, through grace, the matter of his own choice—his mother's vow became his own—and in him dawned every thing which her affectionate and pious heart could either ask or wish. When but a child, he remained with Eli the priest; ministered before him, and before the Lord; became exceedingly dear to this aged servant of God; and we are told, that “the child, Samuel, grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men *.” It was in the early part of his life, that he was honoured with a message of great moment to Eli and his house, by God himself; from which time the Lord was remarkably with him:—“let none of his words fall to the ground;” and caused all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, to know that “Samuel was established to be a prophet.”

As he advanced in life, his weight and importance in the state appeared—his superior wisdom, piety and zeal, were displayed—and by his means, under God, a great and glorious reformation was wrought. While he was a judge in Israel—the first person in the state—his house at Ramah, was a temple; for “there he built an altar to the Lord †.” Oh, how happy would it be for the world, if judges, nobles, and princes, would copy this great example—if, in every seat and palace, an altar was built for God, and incense burnt daily upon it!

This great man—this example of zeal for God, and of every thing that could adorn and dignify public or private life—was called, through age, from that sphere of great and important service in which he acted. But, on the bad conduct of his two sons, whom he had made judges

* Chap. ii. 26.

† Chap. vii. 17.

over Israel, the elders gathered themselves together, sought out Samuel in his retreat, and made that highly displeasing request, that he "would give them a king to judge them." This venerable saint; this tried friend of his country; whose oracle had always been God, betook himself to prayer, on this great and weighty business.

So high was the esteem in which Samuel, in his advanced age, was held, that God, in his reply to his prayer, said, "they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them*." What a fine appeal is that to Israel, "I am old and grey headed; and behold my sons are with you, and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am. Witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed; whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it to you. And they said, thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand†." In what more striking language could paternal affection, public spirit, piety, zeal for God, speak than in that of Samuel, in his address to the people in the subsequent part of the same chapter?

It is a striking part of Samuel's character, that, although Saul, whom he had anointed king, had rejected his wise and pious counsel, and abused that power with which he had been intrusted, yet he felt deeply for his calamities, and mourned for him till he was even rebuked by God himself.

* Chap. viii. 7.

† Chap. xii. beg.

I do not know that the Old Testament records a more finished character than that of Samuel. In him every thing appears that could adorn him as a man, distinguish him as the friend of his country, or dignify him as a servant of God.

But Samuel must die. There was no exemption from the stroke of death even for him, the best of men. Those lips, from whence truth and wisdom always distilled, must be closed; and those hands become motionless, which were always ready to execute every purpose the kindest heart could suggest. However important his life might be to the Jewish state; however the times might need that striking example of every grace and virtue he set, and those fervent prayers he poured forth continually before his God—or with whatever warmth of affection David, and the pious in Israel, might wish his stay; he must, at the command of the Supreme, become a breathless corps. Though of Samuel it might be said, that “he was the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof;” that in each single prayer was an army; and though of all the servants of God none, except Moses, were honoured with a greater nearness to God, it is an event on record, “Samuel died.” What a great man fell in Israel that day!

How Samuel died—with what calmness—with what placid hope—or with what animating and transporting views of that world to which he was going, no mention is made. But what *other* could such a life of faith, of public spirit, and of piety, have? Oh, how instructive—how great—how venerable must he have appeared in death!

My text records, not only Samuel's death, but his burial, “And they buried him in his house
at

at Ramah." Ramah was the place of his abode ; and in, or near, his house all that could die of this greatest of men was deposited. With respect to his mortal part, his glorious career ended in a grave. This was the second interment by which this spot of earth was distinguished : for here Rachel was buried, who was the fairest of her sex, and dear to the heart of Jacob beyond all expression ; who died by him in the way, as he came from Padan.

Our departed friend, Mr. Samuel Wilton, whose removal from active service in the world and church, was so much regretted, and whose death hath caused such an appearance of mourning in this place this day ; bore too great a resemblance to Samuel of old, to pass unnoticed by any friend or acquaintance present.

He, like Samuel, was a descendant of pious parents ; the eldest son of his mother ; and in early life devoted to God *. He was an example of seriousness, piety, and every thing that was amiable,

* In his private papers, there is frequent reference made to some solemn transactions which had passed between God and his soul. In one place he thus writes, " I would now renew that solemn covenant I have made with thee. Help me, O my God, to vow this solemn vow to thee in the sincerity of my soul : and if, afterwards, in the course of life, I may be tempted to forsake thy ways, and err from thy commandments, then may I remember this my covenant, and demand of my soul, how can I do this wickedness, and sin against so gracious a God ? I know my heart is deceitful. Help me to depend on thy strength. Thou, Lord, art able to keep me from falling, I would take God for my covenant God, the adorable Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Lord, help me to follow thee without reserve ! May such a sufficiency of grace and strength be vouchsafed, that I may be able to stand firm to my covenant engagements—to follow Jesus, my Lord, through all the trials and difficulties of life, hold on with
" courage

amiable, to the young around him. Even in his youth, he spent much time in retirement: and when, as it sometimes happened, his retirement broke in upon the hours of business, a pious and affectionate mother used to apologize for him, "let him alone, he is ripening for heaven;" to which happy place she thought he would soon go, as he had some consumptive symptoms. Under that long illness with which his father was exercised, and on his removal by death, such was his conduct in the trade—such his dutiful and tender regard for his widowed mother—and

"courage to the end, and in my dying hour find sweet comfort flowing from my covenant-interest.

"When, through the corruption of my nature, and the body of sin I carry about with me, I offend thee in any measure, Lord, help me to apply to the precious fountain of my dear Saviour's blood. Oh, blessed Spirit, humble me under a sense of all my sins, and seal a pardon to me, through the blood of Christ, and help me to exercise every grace! O may faith, hope, love, patience, humility, self-denial, &c. be growing in my soul. Oh! keep me close to thyself in every duty! I would desire to choose the way of thy commandments. Oh! may I find pleasure in attending on thee, as I have found heretofore. Oh! that I might be serious, watchful, faithful, conscientious, diligent in every commanded duty. I would desire and beg, thou wouldst grant that sweet intercourses may pass between God and my soul. Oh! may I find my beloved in private duties, and in the public institutions of divine worship.

"Lord, I hope I did first count the cost of engaging with thee. I know that reproaches, and mockings, and contempt, I shall meet with from the world; yet, I hope, I shall be content, if thou but grant me thy favour, which is better than life.

"Now, Lord, I desire to submit myself to thy will—to take on me thy yoke, which is easy, and thy burden, which is perfect freedom—and to come under the bond of thy gracious and well ordered covenant: and in testimony of my desire, to become thy servant, and to have thee for my covenant God and Father, I have put my hearty Amen."

such the strength of his affection for his brother and sisters, that the place of husband and father was, in such a degree, supplied by him, in his early years, as greatly endeared him to his friends, and made him the object of admiration to many.

Among his private papers, there are so many mercies and deliverances recorded, and recorded in such a manner, when he was but about fourteen years of age, as betray a deep, grateful, and commanding sense of God upon the soul. This attention to the divine hand—and this sense of God, attended him from youth to riper years: for in March 8, 1750, this is recorded, viz. “At half after five in the morning, I suddenly awoke with a dreadful shock of an earthquake, attended with a very unusual rumbling noise. We had, in London, felt a less severe shock, about noon, just a month before. At first I was greatly surprised, not knowing what was the occasion of the noise and shock: but when fully awakened, and being sensible of the cause, I cried out, “The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble; “he sits between the cherubims; let the earth “be moved: *” and had such a comfortable sense of my interest in God as my covenant God, as made me quite easy, and calmly to rest secure in him as my portion, “though the mountains “should depart, and the hills be removed.” This I set down to be a memorial to me of the rich grace of my God, vouchsafed to a poor sinful creature. God hath spoken once, yea, twice, and if we go on to provoke the Lord, we may yet feel his hand in a more dreadful manner. May I stand prepared to meet God, and to wait for him in the way of his judgments: and if thy people fall in the common calamity, they will find

find themselves safe in the hands of Christ, who hath the keys of the invisible world; and sudden glory will follow sudden death. Lord, may thine holy Spirit seal thy love to my soul: then should I not fear, tho' the world, and all things therein, be burnt up.

“Awake, ye tempests, and his fame

“In sounds of dreadful praise declare;

“And the sweet whisper of his name

“Fill every gentler breeze of air.” WATTS.

Besides recording the providential dealings of God, he records also God's dealings with him in a way of grace—his growing obligations to God, through Christ, for the support of the divine life in his soul—the strength and comfort he, at seasons, derived from waiting upon God—and the very powerful impression which particular portions of God's word had made upon him. Here I could with pleasure enlarge: but the season of the year, and the usual limits of a discourse, forbid.

What was said of Samuel, was eminently true of the deceased, that “as he grew, he grew also “in favour both with God and men.”

He was blest with a sweet natural temper, and possessed no small share of the milk of human kindness. His general behaviour was humane and obliging, kind and gentle; and in him prudence, cheerfulness, and gravity, were so blended, as to render his conversation both pleasing and instructive.

His opinions in religion were not indigested hasty conclusions; but the result of a more close examination of the word of God—of a more attentive hearing and reading—and of a more constant and conscientious praying over what he read

and heard, than is commonly found in these unhappy times. Instead of being, like many, a reed shaken with every wind, he was an immovable pillar in the house of God. That zeal he had for God, for Christ, and truth, was sweetly attempered with discretion. Of candor he was a very instructive example: and if *orthodoxy* and *charity* were always to meet, as they did in him, what might not the Friends of both hope and expect?

In commercial life he was an example of integrity and strictest Honour: and it is much to be wished, that he might be universally copied in his godly jealousy over himself; lest in the pursuits of this world, his concern about another should either be lost, or abate*.

With the power, he had also an heart to do good. Multitudes can testify that his actions were liberal and beneficent.

* In the papers already referred to, he writes, "Oh how great are the encroachments of a vain world! Alas! how much time and thought is taken up in pursuing it! Oh for grace to enable me to resist the corruptions and evil of this world, whilst I am, so deeply concerned with it! Lord, is it not difficult to be in the midst of temptation, yet not comply? How many are the snares to which the world exposes! Yet, O my soul, take encouragement, Jesus hath grace sufficient for thee. He will lead and conduct thee safe amidst storms and trials; for he will guide his people by his counsel, and afterwards receive them to glory. It is but a little Time, O my soul, thou hast to do with this world: and then farewell care and trouble. Thou wilt, through the merits of thy dear Saviour, enter on a glorious possession. What! shall I murmur at cross events, and be discouraged at the frowns of a vain world? Shall I, who profess to follow Jesus, be unwilling to take up his cross? Whom the Lord loves he chastens. Lord, I have need to be scourged to be purified. I have much sin, and much corruption to be subdued. Oh take thine own away to complete thine own work!"

Humility

Humility formed a very striking part of his character; and made the other virtues and graces, with which God had adorned him, shine with brighter lustre.

I fear there are but few Christians, in these times, with respect to whom undissembled piety is so much the settled habit, the constant dress, of the mind as it seemed to be of his.

The trials he was called to endure in the affliction and death of those who were bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, the delight of his eye, the joy of his heart, the staff of his age, and dear to every affection of his soul, were exceedingly great: yet, under these trials, he exemplified that calmness, that patience, that resignation, which christianity alone can inspire *.

In private life, few had the happiness of being equally valued by their friends and acquaintance,

* Under some great affliction, he writes thus, " Afflictions
 " are not sent in vain to the people of God: therefore, O
 " my soul, something God is about to do by calling thee in-
 " to the furnace, and he hath a right to do what he pleaseth
 " with his creatures, Adore his sovereign power. The same
 " hand can conduct, and will lead thee through it, and display
 " the wisdom and goodness of a father. Lord, lay not thine
 " hand too heavy, lest thy servant sink under it! Oh strength-
 " en the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees! Give
 " me faith and patience, and a will resolved into thy will.
 " Dark is the Providence that lies before me. All appears
 " with confusion; but all is calm and serene in thy wise
 " counsels. Oh give me to act faith on thy power, thy wis-
 " dom, thy goodness, and the great promises of thy word!
 " Oh! bring me nearer to thyself by all thy providential
 " dispensations, and keep me from murmuring against thee,
 " my kind and heavenly father. Oh! help me to leave my
 " concerns in thine hands, as in the hands of a covenant
 " God. Oh! at last bring me through all these trials to
 " that rest which is above, where sighing shall flee away,
 " and sin shall no more molest, and where all my work will
 " be praise and love!"

To

To his children he was not wanting in any of the duties of a wife and affectionate parent; which was returned, on their part, with filial piety. Here our departed friend had the advantage of Samuel. What his sons were—what virtues and graces they possessed—what attainments they had made in every thing great and good—what pleasing hopes they inspired—and how deeply their loss was deplored, I need not inform you*: whilst the conduct of two of the sons of Samuel was such as wrung sorrow from the heart of that venerable saint and prophet.

In this church he was at once an ornament and a pillar, and in him we have lost a prudent counsellor, a faithful and a steady friend. Oh! may the great Head of the church raise up others in this place “like-minded, who will naturally care “for our state.”

When, called away from active service, his friends and children might learn, from his example, a very instructive lesson of patience and quiet submission to the will of God. Towards the close of life, the more vigorous and sprightly powers of the mind failed him; yet his trust in God, through the Mediator, remained unshaken to the last. When he had received the sentence of death in himself, he not only possessed his soul in patience, under the pressing infirmities of a decaying body, and with that meekness and resignation to the will of his God, for which he had been eminent under some of the greatest trials the human heart can know; but even “rejoiced in hope of the glory of God.” Death

* Vide two excellent Sermons; one preached on the death of Mr. Thomas Wilton, by the Rev. Dr. Gibbons; the other on the death of my very dear friend, Dr. Samuel Wilton, by the Rev. S. Palmer.

was to him an object to be wished—a friend—and as such he met and embraced it.—

But to praise the dead is not my business. In this instance, it would be needless to do it. The virtues of our departed friend are more eloquent than I—will embalm and endear his memory—and, I trust, live and shine in the character of each descendant. What I have had in view, in the account I have given, is the good of the living, the credit of religion, the Redeemer's honour, and the Glory of God who made him what he was, and gave him all he possessed.

However important he might be in the station he once filled—however esteemed and beloved by friends, by wife, or children—or how much soever these times may need such an example as he set, or such prayers as those he put up to God; he is dead—he is dead and buried—“buried in his own house”—in the British Ramah*, where lies many a Samuel—where many an Israelite hath mourned—where many a “Rachel” hath refused to be comforted, weeping for her “children”—where many a Rachel lies—where many a Jacob hath wept—and where my heart hath lately bled.

Now, if Samuel is dead—if the best of men under both dispensations are dead too—who can expect an immortality upon earth? Wast thou, O man, a Prince, sitting in all thy state and pomp, death would pass through thy guards, enter thy palace, take the crown from thine head, the sceptre from thine hand, and put thee on a level

* Bunhill Fields.

with thy meanest subject. Had we the faith of Abraham—the meekness of Moses—the martial skill, courage, and devotion of David—the firmness and piety of Daniel—the gentle and affectionate temper of the beloved disciple—or the faith, zeal, and fortitude of the great apostle Paul; we must yield to death. No station, however high or important—no connections in life, however endeared—no accomplishments, however pleasing—no virtues, however lovely—no graces, however distinguished, can secure from its arrest. Perhaps there are no convictions, at once so universal and so little influential, as the convictions mankind have of death. What we want is, to have our convictions on this highly interesting article brought home to the heart. Let each heart, then, before me be examined. If we do indeed believe that we must die, do we “die daily” in the sense of the apostle? Methinks, if my own convictions were as deep and strong as they ought, I should study the will of my divine Master with more closeness and attention—pray for myself and others with more fervour of devotion—preach with more energy than I do—and labour more to come close to every hearer’s heart. If every pulse that beats leaves the number less—if I must so soon be called away from earth—how comes it to pass, that my attempts are so weak and feeble to stop the sinner on his way to perdition—to raise each humble and dejected spirit—to pour ease and comfort into every wounded heart—to strengthen and establish the people of God—to inflame their love to Christ—and to promote *his* interest, with which the happiness of this fallen world is so inseparably connected?

If

If Samuel must die—if no plea, even of faith or piety, will be heard—what a dreadful evil must sin and rebellion against God be? What must that be which would not spare the most distinguished of all the servants of Jehovah? The first mention that is made of death was, on Adam's transgression: and the continuation of its dominion through every age, must be ascribed to the fall of him in whom all fell; and to the sad resemblance there is between his disobedience and that of all his descendants. When the Apostle says, "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all men have sinned,"* he puts it beyond all doubt, that sin is the dreadful cause of death's introduction and extensive dominion. By this Patriarchs and Prophets have been slain. The thousands of disorders that beset mankind—all the pains which nature feels—the pangs of parting—the agonies of death—the breathless corps—these, O sin! are thy work; and this, O sinner! thou takest into thy bosom. Sin is the murderer of thy fathers—will lay thine head as low as theirs—and yet thou wilt not let it go. Alas! what multitudes admit sin into their houses—into their very hearts—without concern or suspicion, although it is stained with the blood of fathers, wives, and children. When, Oh when, shall the world take up arms, and wage perpetual war against it! O ye pious, who have deplored its entrance into our world, and felt deeply for it on your own account; persevere, through grace, in that opposition to its power, which it is at once your duty and interest to maintain. It is the worst enemy of man—the

* Rom. v. 12.

source of every evil felt or feared. When, my brethren, we are tempted to commit it, let us pause, and think what sin hath done—what desolation sin hath made—who have fallen its victims—how certain it is that we must fall its victims too—and what flames it hath kindled, and still feeds, in the world beneath.

If Samuel must die—if the wisest and best among mankind must die too—then, there must be some future state. Who that considers what this world is, and what the perfections of God are, can suppose that this distinguished Patriarch—that the godly in later times—that our dear departed friend—were made for the present state alone:—that the short period of human life can circumscribe *their* existence? That divine nature the children of God receive; that noble superiority to this world they feel and express; those pious and holy desires which rise within them, which no created object can satisfy; and that resignation to God, and concern for his glory, with which they breathe their last; are a standing proof, that there is some better world than this to which they will be taken. The *body*, which death alone can effect, is neither the servant of God, nor the disciple of Christ. How absurd to suppose that mere matter, in any possible modification, or in a state of the greatest refinement of which its nature is capable, can be the seat of reason, understanding, intellectual knowledge, moral powers, and that faith and piety which give dignity to man, and reflect so much glory on God! O Philosophy! kind author of many a refined pleasure—unpensioned advocate of religion—how ungrateful to thee! how hard thy lot, to have such a monster of absurdity in opinion laid at thy door! That which sees in the eye, hears in the ear,
acts

acts in every limb, feels in every nerve, anatomizes, in idea, the human frame, and reasons on every part, must be something of a higher and nobler nature than any thing material. In that higher and nobler principle, the soul, in which alone the Christian's graces can have their seat, they shall remain when the body is in the grave, and worms have devoured it. At death, the mantle alone drops. Whither was Enoch taken when God took him? Whither did the fiery chariot convey Elijah? What world did Paul see? Whither did Jesus go when his gazing disciples saw him no more? Where every faithful disciple, since that great event, hath gone—where the pious who hear me shall go---where “an host, which no man can number,” shall be found---and where, O sinner! thou shalt never enter: for thy presence is not wanted there, nor hath that place any employment, or any species of happiness, that suits thy taste.

My text records, not only Samuel's death and burial, but in the

SECOND place, the lamentation which was made by Israel for him. “And all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah.”

This token of respect was what Samuel had deserved. His personal merit commanded this honour to be done him at his death. His zeal for God; the degree in which the interest of the public lay upon his heart; and the great and signal blessings he was the means of procuring, made this instance of respect to his name and memory, which Israel shewed, a just debt. How lost must they have been to gratitude and feeling, if they could have withheld it! Samuel's death

was a great loss to the Jewish state, both in its civil and religious interests. By his death, the college of the prophets lost their founder and president; and Israel a powerful intercessor, who poured out his soul daily before God for them, according to what he had said, "moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.*" Israel might well lament at Samuel's death; for they lost their best earthly friend when he expired. His loss would be more deeply felt, as the times loudly called for his wisdom, zeal, and piety; for Saul was become outrageous, and David was driven his country. One would hope, that at Samuel's funeral there was something more than the show, the trappings, and the pomp of sorrow—that many in Israel were *real* mourners—that they saw and felt their loss—that they bitterly bewailed their own sin and folly, in desiring a king when God himself was king, and Samuel a prophet and a judge, among them.

No wise and pious Israelite could mourn at Samuel's funeral for any apprehended loss that aged and venerable saint could sustain. What was the *earthly* to the *heavenly* Canaan? What honour had that, or any other, people to bestow, when compared with what he was gone to possess? How unspeakably more happy Samuel, when dead, than in the happiest hour he ever spent upon earth!

And with respect to our departed friend: he, by death, sustains no loss. The downfall of his earthly tabernacle, the pins of which had been drawn, and the stakes loosened, by almost imperceptible degrees, was the introduction of his soul

* 1 Sam. xii. 23.

to "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." •

Were we to confine our views to the pious, and to the influence which death hath on themselves, we should see no reason for sorrow—we should look on their dying day as a day of joy and triumph. But when we consider their death in connection with the Redeemer's interest upon earth, and the best interest of their families, their friends, and their country; it is a dispensation that ought to be lamented. In this view, I cannot but lament and deplore the breaches which death hath lately made among us. It is

• Many years before his dismissal was granted, he thus writes. "O my soul! what comfort is it to think that thou shalt survive this body! Death will only separate this dear partner from thee, and that only for a time: for as sure as Christ arose from the grave as the first fruits, and gave a noble specimen of the resurrection of the saints, so surely shall I arise, and this vile body receive great advantages. Why, O my soul, should I fear death! If I am found a living member in Jesus Christ, how great will my advantage be by dying! Though I shall be absent from the body for a time, how comfortable to think of being present with the Lord! I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness.

" My flesh shall slumber in the ground
 " Till the last trumpet's joyful sound;
 " Then burst the chains with sweet surprise,
 " And in my Saviour's image rise.

Dr. WATTS.

"A dying time is a trying time. O my soul! see, therefore, to it that thou live like one expecting e'er long to put off this mortal body, and to enter into an awful eternity. And know this, that if thou art found interested in the covenant of grace secured by Christ, in a dying time he will not forsake thee. If he should not grant thee a triumphant passage, thou mayest rely on him for a safe and secure one; and that thou shalt awake in sweet surprise, being compleat in holiness. O happy state!"

mentioned,

mentioned as the crime of God's ancient people, that "the righteous perished, and no man laid it to heart"——that they did not think seriously upon, nor were properly affected by, the removal of the godly from their nation and church by death—that they did not discern their worth or value whilst they lived, nor were sensible of the greatness of the loss they sustained by their death.

The death of the wise and pious, in these times, is an event to be bewailed. They "are the salt of the earth." "Their fruit is a tree of life." The world in which they lived, and the churches to which they belonged, want that profession they made, and that holy life and conversation they maintained. Their removal by death is a loss to be lamented, because of that noble stand they make for Christ and truth; and that proof they give the world of the glorious work of grace, and the reality, power, and dignity of religion. In them we see that we have no ornaments, if we have not the christian graces—no solid supports, if we have not the christian's supports—and no substantial happiness, if Christ is not our Saviour, and God our God.

The death of Samuels among us, is an event to be deplored, as they exert themselves in doing good—as they are always ready to speak for God—and as their example and converse is often blessed for the sinner's conversion. I should neither do justice to my subject, nor to the memory of our departed friend, if I did not mention this: for in his private papers, dated 1750, there is this memorandum. "Lately had the peculiar pleasure to hear, that the Lord had

* Ifai. lviii. 1.

“ blessed some instruction I had some time ago
 “ given to a servant, who lately called to see us,
 “ and appeared to be a pious and holy person,
 “ and dated her conversion from the impression
 “ my discourse had made on her mind. After
 “ having been brought under great convictions
 “ of sin and danger, she was led to the riches of
 “ divine grace in Christ. She became a member
 “ of the Rev. Mr. Andrews’ church. Lord!
 “ what shall I render unto thee that thou should-
 “ est condescend to honour me, a poor sinful
 “ creature, as an instrument in so glorious a
 “ work! Lord, help me to live more to thy
 “ praise!” Oh! what a loss does that family
 sustain that loses such a head! What a loss does
 that church sustain that loses such a member!
 What a loss does that town sustain that loses such
 an inhabitant! Oh! how loudly do the times in
 which we live call for those, in private life, who
 would copy such an example!

The death of the wise and pious is an event to
 be lamented, as one believer hath been often
 made the instrument of strengthening another’s
 faith—of lightening another’s burden—of im-
 proving another’s graces—and of enabling him to
 sing the song of Zion, in this strange land, with
 an happier heart. The people of God can ill
 spare even an individual of their number: for
 they need all the countenance, encouragement,
 help and succour, that earth or heaven can give.
 Where is that child who does not need the
 watchful eye, the wise counsel, the instructive
 example, the affectionate and fervent prayers of a
 pious parent, and all the assistance that parent
 can give him, that he may stem the torrent of
 corrupt nature, and be serious, wise and good,
 in such an age as this?

The

The death of Samuels, either in ancient or in later times, is an event to be deplored, as they stand, when living, the monuments of redeeming grace and power in this fallen world—as in them it is seen what the world would be, if Christ and his salvation had a place in every heart. They are striking proofs what an excellent dispensation that of the gospel is—what a glorious and happy change the word and Spirit of God can effect—how amiable and great Adam's degenerate offspring may become—and what aid and support the pious may expect from God. Who can behold the believer standing his ground in every encounter—repeating his conquests over sin and Satan—bearing up against a world of trouble—behaving with serenity and composure in circumstances in which others would be overwhelmed in sorrow, without inferring, that God is with him of a truth?

The death of the wise and pious is an event to be deeply lamented, as they are the powerful and prevalent intercessors with God for the churches to which they belong, and the nation of which they make the most honourable part. Israel knew the value of Samuel's prayers, and his interest in the court of heaven: for we read, that all the people said to him, "pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we may not die.*" What hand the righteous have in saving a nation from destruction, may be learnt from the success of many a prayer of Moses---and from what God himself said to Abraham respecting Sodom and Gomorrah. "Let not the Lord, said Abraham, be angry, and I will speak yet but this once.

* 1 Sam. xii. 19.

“Peradventure ten should be found there? And
 “he said, I will not destroy them for ten’s
 “sake.”* And the same is strongly intimated
 in what God said to Jeremiah, “pray not thou for
 “this people; neither lift up cry nor prayer for
 “them; for I will not hear thee.”† How can
 the death of those who have stood in the breach—
 who had wrestled like Jacob, and prevailed like
 Israel—who had done much, and would have
 done more, to turn the enemy from the gates,
 be passed over as a trifling matter? Such strides
 are infidelity, vice, and irreligion taking—such
 dark clouds do now hang over this once happy
 country; that we greatly want the holy life and
 fervent prayers of the pious. If we are insensible
 of the loss sustained by their death, that circum-
 stance shews the loss to be the greater. I do not
 feel for the land and nation in which I live, nor
 for the christian cause, as I ought, if the “right-
 “teous perish, and I lay it not at heart.”

And let me also observe, that when the wise
 and pious die—when the Lots and Samuels are
 removed—there is an occasion for lamentation in
 Israel, as the Lord hath often taken the godly
 to himself when some heavy judgement was
 about to fall upon a people. They are taken from
 the evil to come. It is computed, that Methu-
 selah died but one year before the flood. Heze-
 kiah, Josiah, and that other excellent Prince
 Abijah, were taken from the world to glory just
 before some awful visitations from God. Luther,
 a great reformer, died just before the wars in
 Germany began. A good man, and an old poet,
 who had been painfully struck with the death of

* Gen. xviii. 31.

† Jer. vii. 16.

a great number of excellent ministers, about the same time, who had sat in the venerable assembly of divines, wrote a piece, from which what follows, is a quotation;

“ Still do we find black clothes wear out the first,
 “ And fruits the most delicious keep the worst.
 “ Scarce have we dried our eyes for loss of one,
 “ But the sad tidings come, another’s gone.
 “ Triumph, licentious age! —————
 “ Or rather tremble; England; stand aghast
 “ To see thy glorious lamps go out so fast.
 “ When death, like Sampson, thus lays hold upon
 “ The pillars of the church, the building’s gone.
 “ Nay, when we see stars in such numbers fall,
 “ It seems to bode the world’s great funeral.
 “ London! be wise, and think what heaven is doing;
 “ Thy flames are coming when thy Lots are going.*
 “ Well may we fear the Almighty threatens wars
 “ When he commands home his ambassadors.” †

I have my fears that we, of this nation, are too secure—that we do not trace, as we should, the

* It is a remarkable circumstance, that these lines were composed before the dreadful fire of London, 1666, which consumed 13,200 houses, besides 89 churches, &c.

† “ That venerable synod, which of late
 “ Was made the object of men’s scorn and hate,
 “ (For want of copes and mitres, not of graces)
 “ Are now call’d up with Moses, and their faces
 “ When they return shall shine. God sees it fit
 “ Such an assembly should in glory sit.
 “ The learned Twiss went first; it was his right. †
 “ Then holy Palmer, Burroughs, Love, Gouge, White,
 “ Hill, Whitaker, grave Gataker, and Strong,
 “ Pern, Marshall, Robinson —————
 “ I have not nam’d them half, their only strife
 “ Hath been of late who should first part with life.
 “ Those few that yet survive, sick of this age,
 “ Long to have done their parts and leave the stage.”

ITER BOREALE.

‡ Prolocutor in the Assembly of Divines.

many

many marks and signs of God's controversy with us. It is much to be feared that some great evil is fast approaching, and that the godly, whom God is now taking, are taken from it. What is mercy and kindness to them, may be displeasure and judgment to others.

There is, then, much reason to lament when the eminently wise and pious are removed by death.

In *what manner* we should lay their death to heart is an enquiry of no small importance.

I well know that many a heart hath been broken with sorrow for the dead; and that multitudes have nourished grief through life, and with their grief have cherished also an impatient murmuring spirit. But this is not the sorrow we should feel on the removal of the amiable, excellent, and useful, by death. That sorrow which such a dispensation calls for, is a sorrow arising from a sense of the loss sustained by ourselves, the church, and world—a sorrow that looks to God, and is submissive to him. When the apostle Paul told the Elders of the Ephesian church, “that they should see his face no more, “they wept sore, fell on his neck and kissed “him.”* And shall the godly be taken away *now*, and we not feel on the occasion? Shall some eminent saint, of long standing in the church—or some young Lazarus—be cut off by the stroke of death, and we not mourn the event? There must be something much amiss in my heart if I do not.

If we lament the death of the wise and pious, in a proper manner, we shall enquire wherefore

* Acts xx. 37.

God is contending with us. However happy their death is to them, it is a calamity to us survivors. What is there in this world we can so ill spare as the people of God? It is for their sake the world stands. It behoves us, then, to "hear the rod," and to understand its meaning. Our enquiry should be, what sins we have committed — what declensions we are chargeable with? If any of the godly are taken away because we who survive have departed from God — "have left our first love" — have wandered in our thoughts and affections from the Saviour; it can be of no small importance that we should know this, that we may be humbled in the dust before God for it.

If we lament, as we ought, the death of the godly, we shall prepare to follow them in the way in which they walked. If I see not the vast and unspeakable importance of godliness — if I wish not, from my soul, to be godly — if it is not my fervent prayer that divine grace may take occasion from the death of the godly to quicken my soul, and to attach me more strongly to God, Christ, and religion; I do not lay their death to heart. How can I be said to have felt, as I should, on account of their removal, if I resemble them not — if I cleave not to Christ as they did — If I pray not with something of their constancy and fervour — and if I seek not the same virtues and graces by which they were distinguished among men? If we sorrow, as we ought, for the death of the pious, whether old or young, we shall see that their life is the best life we can live — that their death is the only safe and comfortable death we can die. If we follow not "those who thro' faith and patience do now
" inherit

“inherit the promises”—if we take not those steps they took that God may be *our* God; that Christ may be *our* Saviour; that the Holy Ghost may renew *us* and dwell in *us*; that we may have grace in possession, glory in pleasing expectation, and after death in fruition; it is a truth that, however nearly they might be allied to us, however numerous the tears may be we have shed over them, or however frequent and respectful the mention we make of them, we do not properly mourn. Except we oppose, and pray against, an ensnaring world, a tempting adversary, and a corrupt and sinful heart, as they did—except heavenly gifts and graces are sought for by us as they were by them; and we make, through grace, the cultivation of godliness, in all its branches, as serious a business as they did, we lay not their death to heart as we ought. Suppose me to have sustained the loss of a pious father; or the, perhaps, equal loss of a pious mother: in whatever degree I may grieve, the great thing is wanting still if I am not resolved for God, and if my soul is not so impressed with the importance of that virtue and piety they exemplified, that I am constrained to pursue it. Suppose me to have lost a pious brother or sister: what are the tears I may shed, if I imbibe not their temper and spirit—if I do not imitate that which communicated a real beauty and lustre to them—and if I am not quickened by their death to make a serious business of preparing for my own? That parent who is called forth to that great trial of faith and patience, that of following an engaging and pious child to the grave, does, alone, properly mourn, who, whilst he weeps, is thankful to God for ripening his child for glory in the morning of life—spares no pains
that

that the rest of his children may be trained up for God—and, through grace, keeps that happy world in view, and prepares for it, where pious parents and children shall meet again and spend a blissful eternity together. A Friend's death we lament not, as we ought, if our hearts are not made better by it—if divine and eternal things lie with no more weight upon us than before—if we see not a greater value in Christ, who hath put a smile on the face of death, and made it the believer's friend—and if we are not quickened in the pursuit of that great salvation of which the blood of Jesus was the price, and which it is the glory of the gospel to reveal.

And I shall only add, that if we lament, in a proper manner, the death of the wise and pious, it must engage us to labour, strive, and pray that we may fill their places in the world and church to the glory of God, the Redeemer's honour, the credit of religion, and the good of our fellow-creatures. The death of every able and faithful minister is a loud call to me to deal plainly, affectionately, and faithfully with souls; and to plead the cause of Christ in every way the most enlightened, zealous, and successful, have done it. And every private Christian is called upon, by the death of any of his number, to supply their lack of service—to lay out himself for Christ—and to propagate, if possible, his own gifts and graces, that the world and church may sustain no loss. If, when a breach is made in a church by death, no one is constrained thereby to step forth and fill it; that breach is not suitably lamented. Suppose me the son of some pious person who is dead: with whatever respect or veneration I may mention my father's name; or whatever pain or sorrow his death might have

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occasioned; I do not mourn, as I should, if I attempt not, in the strength of divine grace, to possess his serious, godly, and benevolent spirit—to fill his place—and to promote the good of others, and the cause of Christ. O ye sons of pious parents! If ye suffer the altars to fall which your fathers built—if ye do not burn incense daily upon them, as they did—and if that zeal for the ark of God which glowed in their breasts, hath no place in yours; you lay not to heart their removal by death. Oh! that there might rise in the room of old Elies, young Samuels; of old Elijahs, young Elishas; and of Pauls, young Timothys, in this, and in every, church.

Our departed friend, “though dead, yet speaks.” He speaks in the language of comfort to his mourning widow. It is her privilege and happiness, on this mournful occasion, to follow him, in idea, through death, to the regions of the blest. What is her loss—what is loss to us—is to him unspeakable gain. Under this painful dispensation, she may look forward to that time when the trumpet shall sound—when Ramah shall give up its dead—when every grave shall be opened and every tomb rent—and when she shall meet him at the right hand of Jesus.

To his children he speaks, in death, in every way that tends to move, to melt, to encourage, and to establish the heart. His departure is calling upon them to recollect and live all his wise instructions; all his faithful and affectionate admonitions—to copy his excellent example—and to prize and to seek, above every thing else, those great blessings which he was constantly asking of God for them with all the fervour and affection

fection of his heart. I trust they will live, like him, beloved; and, like him, die lamented.

Oh! may each friend and relative of the deceased—each member of this church, of which he was at once an ornament and pillar—and each individual present, share that honour and happiness that belongs to Samuel, to our departed friend, and to every real disciple of Christ. Amen.



P. I. N. I. S.

Our departed friend, though dead, yet "speaks." He speaks in the language of comfort to his mourning widow. It is in the language of lowliness, in the language of mourning, to the regions of the dead, through death, to the regions of the dead. *In the Press,*

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